



TOWN OF WEST HARTFORD

Community Planning and Physical Services Committee
Town Hall, 50 South Main Street, **Room 217**
Wednesday, December 5, 2018, 6:00 PM

In attendance: Ben Wenograd, Dallas Dodge, Chris Barnes, Shari Cantor, Beth Kerrigan, Matt Hart, John Phillips, Mark McGovern, Duane Martin and members of the public.

Minutes

1. Call to Order: 6:00 pm

2. Business Items

a. North Main Street Bridge Rehabilitation and Road Diet Considerations

Matt Hart introduced the topic of the meeting and the staff's recommendation to wait until the completion of the North Main Street Bridge rehab to conduct a road diet trial. The staff will present the rationale for the recommendation and then take questions. No action by the committee is being sought.

Duane Martin used an aerial of North Main Street in his presentation. The CRCOG study area was 1.7 miles but based on required merge distances, the road diet corridor would be about a mile.

Showing bridge rehab plans, Mr. Martin explained the 4 stages of construction over a period of 18 months and the way to transition from 4 lanes to 2 for each of the stages. A temporary traffic signal will be installed just south of the bridge to aid vehicles departing Linbrook and Wyndwood and a temporary crosswalk due to closing sidewalks will be added for pedestrians. The changing lane arrangements, a temporary signal and the work zone with equipment and materials would be disruptive to a road diet trial and could be unsafe.

Mr. Martin reviewed aspects of the CRCOG study. It included 5 alternatives, but none of them were studied over the length of the corridor which has 16 side streets and 85 driveways. The study also did not address traffic diversion. There was no concept plan created to review with the public through an engagement process.

The objective of a trial is to test a road design, evaluate operations and gather feedback. Ideally, it would not be conducted in the winter and last 4-6 months.

A comment was made suggesting that since there will be diversions resulting from the construction, then it would be the right time for the trial. Dallas Dodge expressed concern that the results of a trial during construction could be faulty. Mr. Martin noted we would be collecting traffic counts prior to, during and post construction on Trout Brook Drive and Mountain Road which will be useful but not necessarily relevant.

Questions were asked about the lane drops, impacts on side streets and whether the construction would have been easier had the design been completed. It is possible.

A resident asked that road treatment on South Main between Park and Beechwood be utilized for a different type of trial. One lane and shoulder between Fern and Asylum during construction.

A resident expressed a concern about the lack of urgency given the safety concern present on the road.

Staff and Councilors replied that there were safety concerns with the planning study's alternatives. The police and fire departments expressed concerns with the center turn lane and impact on response times.

Multiple residents asked the Council to think big and make major changes to address speeding and bad driver behavior.

Chris Barnes stated that residents of Trout Brook Drive expressed the same concerns about speeding and road safety. It is a town wide problem.

Mark McGovern noted that the CRCOG study was not a design plan and the staff's overall concern is that of safety during the construction project. Staff has to put the same level of analysis in all of its road improvement projects.

Matt Hart noted that the Town's engineer's expertise needs to be respected.

A discussion ensued on the Town's commitment to fund the trial. No decisions have been made yet.

Shari Cantor asked Matt Hart if staff could evaluate the suggested one lane approach between Fern and Asylum. She further stressed the need

for a holistic approach. Concerns expressed by police and fire give her pause.

A road diet in Alexandria, VA was discussed. Town staff will follow up with their engineering staff.

The committee directed staff to evaluate the one lane option and report findings at the January CPPS meeting.

3. Communications

- a. November 21, 2018 Minutes – no action taken

4. Staff Reports

- a. Public Works – Solar trash receptacles have been deployed in the Center and on Park Road. The RFP for demolition of the Recycling Center goes out on Dec. 6th. The building will be vacated soon. Temporary access to the yard will be provided using a new route. Collection of batteries, oil, etc. will be temporarily suspended.
- b. Community Development – Staff had a productive meeting with residents of the Boulevard regarding parking. Another working group has been established with residents in the Woodrow area but they preferred to meet after the holidays. Meetings with both groups scheduled for first week of January. The Park/84 project is reaching a milestone. The exit ramp is scheduled to be opened on Friday, Dec. 7th. Work on other parts of the project will continue until mid 2019.
- c. Other

5. Adjournment – 8:30 pm

The next regular CPPS meeting will be held at **8:00AM** on **January 16, 2018**.